



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PRESENTS MOCK CHECK TO CITY OF EAST PRAIRIE**

In a Mock Check Ceremony on October 22, 2004, U.S. Congresswoman Jo Ann Emerson joined Greg Branum, Missouri State Director for USDA Rural Development, in presenting \$51,706 in grant funds to, East Prairie Mayor, Gene Ditto.

"I'm very pleased to help celebrate this award to East Prairie. In today's rural economy, our community history and our training for the future are immense sources of pride. This grant will enable us to enhance both," Emerson said. "Rural Development has identified a tremendous opportunity to renovate a building that will serve important needs in East Prairie. This investment in our community will pay dividends for a long, long time."

"Rural Development is very proud to be able to assist communities in Mississippi County with these important projects," said Branum.

The \$51,706 grant is funded from the Rural Development Community Facility Grant. These grant funds are to be used to purchase and renovate a building to house the City's museum and technical skills training center. The grant will benefit the residents of East Prairie.

"Preservation of things from our past is vital in keeping our newer generation informed as to what we had to work with to get us to this point in life. This grant is going to help us do this in a much better way once we get our museum up and running again, and we are really excited about that," said Mayor Ditto.

"Funding important projects like this mirrors President Bush's initiatives and Rural Development's mission of being committed to the Future of Rural Communities," Branum added. "Appreciation is also extended to U.S. Senators "Kit" Bond and Jim Talent and U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson for supporting USDA Rural Development. They have been strong proponents for the necessary funding for essential services for rural Missourians."

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on rural programs is available by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/mo/> or can contact Cathy Walters, at Charleston Office, 831 S. Hwy 105, Charleston, Missouri 63834 or by calling 573-649-9947.

**"Committed to the future of rural communities."**

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